



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

MEDIA RELEASE



Victorian Teachers Need More Protection

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Western Victorian MP Stuart Grimley has thrown his support behind new government legislation that allows schools to ban abusive adults from the school grounds, but he says more must be done to protect teachers from violent students.

Teachers are one of the most important professions we have in our community. They shape our community's future by providing our kids with important educational and life lessons. It is only fair that they are protected at work.

As a former teacher, Mr Grimley knows many former colleagues who have had issues with angry parents or guardians. This is an issue that seems to be becoming more prevalent in our education system. The option to have an Immediate School Community Safety Order or an Ongoing School Community Order will give teachers another level of safety.

However, what this Bill doesn't address is the convoluted and long process of reporting troublesome students through EduSafe forms. Mr Grimley has been approached by teachers who say forms take quite a long time to fill out which discourages some teachers and support staff from lodging a form, even if the behaviour is undoubtedly reportable.

Further, there are school staff who have only just found out about the EduSafe protocol's existence and other teachers and support staff who aren't aware that it exists. There are no guidelines about what behaviour constitutes reportable conduct so each school's threshold for reporting differs.

This Bill talks to the issue of parent-to-school violence but ignores the very real problem of *children-to-school violence*. The problems are very much interrelated and must be addressed.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"I would like to commend the government on this initiative. I would have liked to see the government continue their consultations when they were drafting the legislation, to ensure it reflected what the education community needs.

As a previous school teacher, I know that educators have a tough enough job as it is. They should not be abused or threatened, either online or in person, and certainly not physically assaulted. These new School Community Safety Orders will be a great help in ensuring our teacher's safety at work.

I've spoken to many teachers about the need for a better process dealing with violent students. We forget that there are students in secondary school that are as big as grown adults. These students pose a great threat to teachers. The current EduSafe form that is used to report these students is far too long and difficult to fill-out. The reporting thresholds differ from school to school as well. What might be a reportable offence at one school, won't be at another.

We must create a streamlined reporting system, with state-wide guidelines for teachers to follow when reporting a violent student. No one should feel unsafe at work."

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